

# CITY CRUSHED AS BLUES SLAM 7!

By **STUART EARP**; Wycombe W 7, St. Albans City 0

**WYCOMBE** Wanderers turned on their most crushing display of attacking football of the season on Tuesday night when they completely outclassed St. Albans City to the tune of 7-0. It was their largest league victory for years and earned them their second £40 bonus for the three-clear-goal victory from the sponsors, Rothmans.

Poor St. Albans just didn't know what hit them. This was the seventh time they had conceded three or more goals and their defence looked hopelessly inadequate. Time after time they were caught suicidally square at the back and the Wanderers front runners showed no mercy.

Had it not been for some sterling work by goalkeeper Wilf Woodend and full back Chris Clark, the score would have been in double figures. These two saved the Saints on numerous occasions but with the rest of the team being swamped, their efforts just couldn't stem the tide.

This was one of the worst City sides seen at Loakes Park for many years. All but a few of their players were simply not up to the required standard. They had scored only three goals away from home all season and never looked remotely like troubling home goalkeeper John Maskell.

## SHEER PACE

True, they were unfortunate to meet a Wycombe side on their very best form but some of the defensive errors really had to be seen to be believed. The back four were completely bewildered by the sheer pace of

the Wycombe attacks which tore massive gaps in the heart of the defence. Added to that, the Saints gave the home side all the time they needed to measure their passes and set up raids monotonously.

Wanderers were quick to capitalise. Their passing from every player was of the highest standard and the ball was sprayed through from up to 50 yards with precision accuracy while they always had a man in support to help out.

Mick Holifield, Tony Brothers and inevitably, Larry Pritchard sent ball after ball curling upfield for the front runners to chase and their speed and finishing proved altogether too much for St. Albans.

Although veteran Hogwood, one of only three players left from last term, headed off the line from Searle in the third minute, City gave no sign of what was to come in the opening stages. They too passed the ball accurately without looking particularly dangerous but as the

match progressed, so the Saints deteriorated.

The first of many defence-splitting balls from Holifield put Tony Horseman clean through in the 17th minute but Woodend managed to deflect the ball away for a corner. The corner ratio indicates the pattern of the game — Wycombe won 12 while their opponents could muster only one.

A shocking defensive error in the 18th minute began the visitors' tale of woe. From a throw-in, Smith knocked the ball back to Clark who tried to pass back to his goalkeeper. Keith Searle however, spotted the potential danger and intercepted the pass, crashing it over Woodend for the first goal.

Clark then began his own one man battle to keep out Wycombe by saving on the line from Searle. But he was powerless three minutes later when Perrin's fine through ball caught St. Albans square as Pritchard raced on. He took the ball wide and then firmly banged home the second goal.

From then on, the Saints defence visibly shuddered every time Wanderers were attacking. As well as forging through the middle, Keith Searle and Co. were totally dominant in the air, presenting a different threat for the visitors to deal with.

Woodend saved from Holifield and Clark headed Searle's effort off the line and then tackled the centre forward a split second before he could shoot, as Wycombe powered forward ceaselessly. More goals were inevitable and in the 38th minute Rob Williams, although playing at full back, joined the list of goalscorers. Tony Horseman withstood a couple of half-hearted tackles inside the penalty box and slipped the ball through to Williams, who ramméd the ball home. Woodend got a hand to the ball but the momentum of the shot took it over the line.

The Saints managed to hold on until half time but the Wycombe pressure was relentless and there was to be no

let-up. Woodend parried a Horseman drive from eight yards after a home forward yet again had been allowed room in the penalty area and then, in the 54th minute, Wanderers made it four. Williams, up with the attack, once more barged aside two tackles and although challenged again, the ball squirted out to Perrin on the flank. Steve crossed, Williams missed completely, and Searle thumped the ball home. Although Williams had fallen into an offside position, he was not interfering with play and referee Gregory awarded the goal.

Woodend saved from Holifield again after a superb Pritchard pass in the 63rd minute but he was helpless to prevent goal number five and the start of the Saints' largest defeat of the season after 66 minutes. Another Pritchard cross found Perrin, whose shot struck a defender and bounced conveniently for Steve to simply nod the ball home. Three minutes later Hogwood brought

Despite an excellent performance, the visitors suffered a brilliant victory. Dick Porthall combined in a passing move with Bates, Colin Cooper and Spice equibalised. Pete Wilson, Frank into the lead. The visitors took Phil Passmore pushing. Flackwell of the second half, resulted in a Prestwood goal in the early part. Sustained pressure on the Chie Saunders scored. when, following a fine move 20 minutes, the Heathens levelled in front. However, after the side a boost when he shot various weeks, gave himself and been lacking confidence in pre-